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Did Taddy Kennedy tell the truth?

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kopechne say they wouldn't vote for him

Another Look at Chappaquiddick

By Vera Glasser

Washington

Almost six years after their daughter died in Sen. Edward Kennedy's car, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kopechne have turned against him.

They now question his version of what happened on that tragic night in July 1969, and no longer support him for President.

But it is doubtful that the Kopechnes' changed attitude will, or could, produce legal action against the senator.

The Kopechnes recently revisited Chappaquiddick for the second time, "because we wanted to look over the situation again," as Mrs. Kopechne put it.

Speaking from their home in the Poconos, near Wilkes Barre, Pa., she described how her husband sought out scuba diver John Farrar and Sheriff Christopher Look, whose versions of events, given at the inquest, were damaging to Kennedy.

"The Kopechnes feel they were brainwashed at the time of the tragedy," Farrar said, when reached at his sporting goods shop in Edgartown, Mass. "They wanted us to know, now that they can be more objective, that they believe our testimony 100 per cent."

"Kopechne didn't say it in so many words, but it was clear he felt Kennedy

had lied," Farrar said.

Farrar, the only person to see Mary Jo inside the submerged car, brought up the body the morning after the vehicle plunged off the bridge into Poucha Pond. He had always maintained that she could have lived up in two hours, breathing in a small air pocket, and that prompt action could have saved her.

Sheriff Look's testimony contradicted Kennedy's claim that he was headed for the ferry, not the beach. Look insists he saw the Kennedy car 1½ hours later than the senator reported.

According to the Massachusetts Attorney General's office, the Kopechnes probably waived any right to litigate when they accepted a \$140,000 settlement, \$50,000 of it from the insurance company and \$90,000 from Kennedy personally.

Mrs. Kopechne believes the only ones who can shed light on the unanswered questions are Kennedy and the five "boiler room" girls (Kennedy assistants) who were at the Chappaquiddick party.

She is bitter because the girls have never communicated with her.

As for Kennedy, Mrs. Kopechne said, "We are not the kind of people who seek revenge."

The last time the Kopechnes heard from the

senator was in the fall of 1974. He called to alert them to a forthcoming series on Chappaquiddick in the Boston Globe, and "that was the extent of the conversation," Mrs. Kopechne said.

The Globe series raised questions about Kennedy's credibility and that of the Kopechnes' attorney, Jo-

seph F. Flanagan of Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

It never has been clear who paid the heavy costs of Flanagan's representation of the Kopechnes, people of modest means, over a period of years. At the autopsy hearings and on other occasions, Flanagan has consistently taken positions espoused by Kennedy.

